



HIGH RISE BAKERS: Working towards a social enterprise PROJECT REPORT

Kye Askins
January 2018



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Acknowledgements

Thanks to all staff and volunteers at Bridging the Gap and High Rise Bakers, who have been central to this scoping research project – for your generosity of time, spirit and cakes!

This research was unfunded.

High Rise Bakers: Scoping Research Project Report

Published 2018 by University of Glasgow
University Avenue, Glasgow G12 8QQ
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1. Introduction

Bridging the Gap (BtG) was established as a charitable organisation¹ in the Gorbals, Glasgow in 1998, with the aim of enabling local churches (Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic) to work together to meet local needs, specifically addressing sectarian tensions.

Since then, Glasgow has experienced increasing migration. The 2011 Census recorded 21% of the city's residents as non-White Scottish ethnicity; 50% as belonging to religions other than Church of Scotland or Roman Catholic (notably 38% stated no religion or did not answer; 5% were Muslim); and 13% as speaking languages other than English.²

BtG has developed its work to build relationships across such diversity more broadly, with a central focus on enabling people to find 'common ground'. The organisation runs a range of services and initiatives, in three main areas: young people, community inclusion and families. BtG Purpose Statement³ reads:

- To build positive relationships across the divides, with particular reference to: integration of Black and Minority Ethnic communities, and the transition from primary to secondary schools.
- To value the humanity and nurture the potential of every individual, and where appropriate, provide practical support.
- To celebrate the good in our community, by providing the opportunity for people of diverse backgrounds to discover their common ground, overcoming racism, sectarianism, territorialism and isolation.

BtG runs a range of services across its main target areas. This scoping research was a two month project to qualitatively ascertain the development of the **High Rise Bakers** project (1.1). The research is situated in the wider context of Glasgow City Council's *Community Planning Partnership Single Agreement Outcomes* strategy (2013), in which the "key focus for partners is to take a more integrated approach to delivering services" under the *Thriving Places* initiative⁴, to which BtG ascribes.

Indeed, persistent inequalities in the G5 postcode area led the Gorbals being chosen as one of the first neighbourhoods to take on the *Thriving Places* approach: while the area has seen extensive regeneration in recent years, "a large majority of data zones in the area remain in the poorest 10% of data zones in Scotland".⁵

¹ Registered charity no. SC028657.

² See <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/home.html>

³ BtG Annual Report (2015-16): <http://www.bridging-the-gap.org/Resources/Annual%20Report%2015-16%20web.pdf>

⁴ See <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0043/00435436.pdf>

⁵ Leman, L. (2016) *Community Led Monitoring Framework*. Report to Gorbals Regeneration Group.

1.1 HIGH RISE BAKERS

High Rise Bakers (HRB) is a 'primary purpose trading venture', set up in April 2015. The project was developed through bread-making activity at another BtG project (Big Thursdays Drop-In), where staff and volunteers identified that making bread can bring isolated people together in common activity, building connections through being 'engaged in something purposeful'.⁶ Initially funded for a one-year pilot by the People and Communities Fund, and extended annually since, HRB operate every Wednesday and Friday 9am-3pm:

- offering marginalised local individuals⁷ and refugees from across Glasgow the opportunity to volunteer and learn/develop skills;
- selling 'Real Bread', made slowly without artificial additives,⁸ to local customers and businesses;
- engaging diverse individuals in common activity through baking;
- further offering a space for conversation for volunteers during tea and lunch breaks.

HRB "aims to provide delicious, nutritious, fairly-priced bread to local residents, organisations and businesses in the Gorbals, while reducing isolation and increasing the well-being of our employees and volunteers".⁶ This is tied to BtG's aims to build community and social capacity through an asset based community development (ABCD)⁹ approach to *working with* local people.

The project is based in a shared kitchen in community rooms on the ground floor of Waddell Court, a multi-storey block of flats in the Gorbals, managed by the New Gorbals Housing Association (NGHA). HRB started selling bread in October 2015, after a set-up period of training to ensure that a consistently high standard of bread could be produced. HRB bakes batches of Gorbals loaves and multigrain loaves every session, plus speciality breads to order. Shortbread, flapjack, pancakes, scones and sunshine cookies are also made weekly.

HRB has developed close links with the local Adelphi nursery: nursery staff saw HRB's notice board and approached them to supply snacks, as the nursery has an 'eat local, buy local' ethos. HRB have since supplied them with healthy bread, scones, pancakes, biscuits, etc. HRB then discovered that the nursery keeps hens, and set up an arrangement in which HRB take Adelphi's eggs, and offset the cost against the snacks provided for the nursery. HRB have since run a bread-making workshop for the nursery children and staff.

In addition, HRB offer bread-making workshops to local nurseries, schools and community groups. The aim is to enable participants to learn baking skills, and about nutrition, numeracy, literacy and team-building; and for HRB volunteers to build self-confidence, and

⁶ High Rise Bakers Business Proposal (2015).

⁷ Ostensibly people living in the G5 postcode area.

⁸ Defined by the Real Bread Campaign as made without the use of processing aids or artificial additives, over 12-24 hours which maximises access to the nutrition and flavour available in the flour.

⁹ ABCD aims for sustainable development of communities based on strengths and potential, assessing and building on the resources, skills, and experience available in a community. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asset-based_community_development

communication, organisational and group-work skills. Workshops are also intended to raise the profile of HRB and generate income.

Further 'outreach' activities include running stalls at local events, such as the annual Gorbals Fair and monthly Gorbals market, further enabling volunteers to develop a range of abilities beyond baking skills: time management, organisation, and 'customer relations' that are as much about building community as selling a product.

Supported activity through *peer-to-peer learning* is central to BtG's service delivery, including through HRB. BtG has over 20 years' experience successfully supporting a wide range of people with diverse needs/positions through this practice, and volunteers at HRB include people from a variety of backgrounds who have difficulty in finding or sustaining employment because they are carers, are in poor health, are dealing with addiction recovery or are new to the UK and either not permitted to work, or having difficulties entering the labour market due to language or other issues.

Volunteers typically offer 3-6 hours per week to bake and sell the bread/other products. The initial team had two days bespoke training at Bread Matters (see below) in the Borders, to learn to make high quality bread, and about product development and team-building. From that point, these volunteers trained new volunteers, developing their own social skills and confidence, while creating a more team-oriented way for new volunteers to learn. Occasionally, outside training is offered to the whole team, and Food Safety Awareness training is made available on an annual basis.

Scotland the Bread, a project within Bread Matters,¹⁰ have adopted HRB as a 'landmark project', through which HRB get advice from Andrew Whitley, the UK's leading expert in the 'Real Bread' movement. HRB has future plans to:

- become an independent social enterprise;
- offer paid opportunities for fair employment;
- obtain and move to larger kitchen space of their own, to extend operating days/hours;
- offer workshops to large organisations such as the NHS as team-building days, to generate further income at more commercial rates

Through continued emphasis on volunteers developing social connections with one another through HRB activities, the aim remains to further build community through relationships with local organisations, eg. through negotiating further selling outlets, providing stalls at events, bread/baked goods for catering at events, and bread-making workshops.

BtG's Annual Report (2016-17) states that:

- 26 volunteers were involved
- 15 are Scottish G5 residents; 11 come from refugee backgrounds
- there were 94 baking days
- 3 workshops were held; one each with schools, nurseries and the public

¹⁰ Scotland the Bread aim to connect farmers, millers, bakers, nutritionists and citizens to produce organic, nutritious grain, locally milled, baked and sold.

2. Scoping research aims and objectives

BtG attempts to respond to complex, changing and diverse local population dynamics and support needs, in robust and adaptable ways. In recent years, significant UK-government driven increases in ‘austerity policies’ have put greater pressure on individuals, especially those in already marginalised positions, and the local authorities and third sector organisations who work with them. BtG, as most organisations working to address issues related to poverty, find themselves and the communities they support facing difficult times and situations.

The HRB Project Development Worker initiated this scoping research project, inviting the researcher to undertake a ‘snapshot’ of HRB’s key achievements and challenges during the first two years. The main research aim was to take a ‘social capacity approach’ to assess HRB’s early development and service delivery, in line with BtG’s organisational values and Purpose (1.), and their ABCD ethos.

Thus, the key research objectives were to explore the ways in which people may support themselves and each other through volunteering at HRB; and to identify potential future service development and directions.

Capturing grassroots community organisation service delivery, and the depth of relations and practices produced through it, is difficult. This is due to many factors, including turnover of people presenting to services, multiple and complex support needs, and a time-limited and pressured work environment. As a ‘scoping’ piece of research, also time-limited, the methodology nevertheless was designed to centre volunteers’ voices (see 3.), to foreground narrative empirical evidence that presents people as individuals rather than statistics.

3. Methods

The researcher had previously undertaken a larger research project at BtG's Big Thursday Drop-In service.¹¹ Through that research, they were familiar with staff and several volunteers at HRB, having spent two sessions at HRB a year earlier, to gain a wider understanding of BtG. Furthermore, several current volunteers came to HRB after attending the Drop-In, where they were known to the researcher.

This familiarity enabled the research to be undertaken relatively swiftly. The researcher spent four days at HRB Oct.-Nov. 2017, baking alongside staff and volunteers, and conducting:

- participant observation; and
- informal interviews

This report is based on analysis of qualitative data. Qualitative (or narrative) research aims to gather 'explanatory data', unlike questionnaires or other quantitative (counting) techniques, to uncover reasons behind and motivations for people's actions and thinking.¹²

3.1 Participant observation

Participant observation is a qualitative methodology, in which the researcher is involved in activities (community-based, organisational or other relevant events) alongside research participants, in order to gain 'understanding through taking part in people's lives'.¹³ What people say and do is recorded in 'fieldnotes', which make up the data, analysed using a grounded theory approach¹⁴ to identify key insights and themes. This method was important to understand baking activity in context.

3.2 Informal interviews

This method is intended as informal 'conversations', which encourage discussion to better understand underlying reasons for opinions and behaviours. Interviews allow scope for research participants to explore and explain their perceptions as well as actions, addressing non-quantifiable matters such as beliefs and feelings.¹⁴ This method was relevant, given the scoping research focus on social capacities and relations, and to centre participants' voices. Interviews were ad hoc, most undertaken in breaks during participant observation baking sessions, though two were set up on different dates.

¹¹ See Askins (2017) <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/141968/1/141968.pdf>

¹² Hay, I. (2010) *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹³ Cook, I. (2005) 'Participant observation'. In Flowerdew, R. and Martin, D. (eds.) *Methods in Human Geography*. London: Pearson Education Ltd.

¹⁴ Devine, F. and Heath, S. (2009) *Doing social science: evidence and methods in empirical research*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

12 informal interviews were conducted; with both staff (Project Development Worker and Bakery Supervisor) and 10 with volunteers. The sample was dependent on people's availability and attendance at HRB. The unfunded nature of the project meant that it was difficult to include people for whom English is an additional language; informal interpretation occurred (volunteers interpreting for others in conversation), but this unfortunately could not be extended to interviews.

woman	staff	2 and half years	Scottish born
woman	staff	2 and half years	Scottish born
woman	volunteer	6 months	Scottish born
man	volunteer	6 months	Scottish born
man	volunteer	1 year	refugee background
man	volunteer	over 2 years	refugee background
woman	volunteer	over 2 years	refugee background
woman	volunteer	2 years	refugee background
woman	volunteer	6 months	Scottish born
woman	volunteer	just starting	refugee background
man	volunteer	just starting	Scottish born
man	volunteer	just starting	Scottish born

TABLE 1: Informal interview characteristics.

In addition, a brief conversation was held with an ex-volunteer who had recently left the project for employment.

4. Strengths

4.1 Reducing social isolation

The main reason participants gave for volunteering at HRB was to lessen social isolation. All spoke at some point about the importance of meeting people and ‘making friends’. Social isolation was commonly linked to not having employment. Several participants are no longer able to work due to ill health, and described wanting to remain active, to ‘be doing something’:

I get a bit down when I'm doing nothing stuck at home ... this gets me out of the house and meeting people

I cannae work due to my health and I'm in my 50s now anyway ... no one is gonna give me a job ... I need to get out of the house while I still can

the best thing is friends ... I'm out the house and making friends

One participant explained that they had been on medication for over a year for mental health related issues, exacerbated by isolation, and they believed that being at HRB for six months had a significant benefit:

I saw my psychiatrist two weeks ago and he says I'm getting better ... umm I feel better less worried ... [having activity and contact] he says they may even reduce my meds next time ... if this continues

Refugees can struggle to find jobs for several reasons, while asylum seekers are not allowed to undertake paid employment. Participants volunteering at HRB from a refugee background agreed that it was important to them to be doing something that is actively ‘part of society’, and meeting people:

and I have friend here is so important to keep new friends in new country



There is also a regular attendee at HRB who is not signed up as a volunteer, due to concerns around benefit sanctions and DWP rules (see 5.2). Nevertheless, they clearly enjoy being part of the team, and undertake all kinds of tasks except for baking (eg. helping make the lunches, fixing things, washing/drying up) and they attend regularly, chatting with everyone there. Informally, HRB provides a place for this person to connect with others.

For most participants, HRB reduces their social isolation by enabling some sense of belonging. Volunteers are clearly invested in what they bake; eg. one participant, who regularly makes the shortbread, is always keen for feedback from customers who buy it, and (if leaving before the end of the day) often phones the Bakery Supervisor to ask if it was all sold, and whether people liked it.

Addressing issues of social isolation for those involved is thus clearly successful; and links directly to HRB's aim to build local community.

4.2 Building community

BtG have extensive experience in the southside of Glasgow, working with and in local communities to build relationships across diversity, enable people to find 'common ground' and enhance community inclusion (see 1.) HRB grew from making bread at BtG's Big Thursdays Drop-In over several years:

that was very popular and seemed to be good at including people who were on the margins ... and so then about 3 years ago we were trying to look to find ways to involve G5 people more cos we felt that they weren't being represented at Big Thursdays so much

Two aspects of community building were identified through the research: relationships developed between volunteers within HRB, which stretch beyond the project; and 'outreach' activities that link HRB with wider community.

Within the project, building relationships is a strong element. Making friends is a critical step in tackling social isolation (4.1) – the key finding here is that friendships are built between people from different backgrounds to (begin to) forge integration. One volunteer who studies catering and hospitality at college continues to volunteer at HRB when their timetable permits because:

it is very different catering here than in [country of origin] ... I need to learn cultural differences of that ... cafes here different very different there ... so HRB I learn the people and custom and language

This participant is also keen to share their culture with Glaswegian volunteers: when they are not able to attend, they sometimes take their own homemade bakes the evening before to the Bakery Supervisor to bring in for the group. Similarly, another Glaswegian-born participant emphasised the importance of connecting with diverse people in the area:

I like the company here you meet a mix of people from all over ... I used to be in the army and you know I travelled a lot ... I like talking to folk from other places ... it's good for us good for community

Tea and lunch breaks are social times for relaxed chat and building emotional connections and bonds. During observation sessions, there was always lively conversation across a wide range of topics, including recent political issues at national and international level, to last night's television, to local (G5 and Glasgow) issues and people. Struggles against adversity are regular topics, with participants discussing 'batting with the welfare' around benefits, or having difficulties with asylum claim, or adapting from asylum to having refugee status, and thus having to switch into 'normal' benefit system (see 5.2).

It was evident that the room next to the kitchen, which has sofas, comfortable chairs and is where the breaks happen, is vital to HRB project work. Both the kitchen and the adjoining room are shared with the Way to Go café (see 5.1). The research shows this 'common room' is an important space, in which sharing of food, drink, conversation and struggles clearly brings people of diverse backgrounds together 'in common'. It is also where products are sold to local customers, and individuals occasionally drop in, thus a key link with wider community (see below).



At times, it seemed that those whose English is an additional language struggled to be part of these conversations, though informal interpreting happens between volunteers from outside Scotland, and Scottish staff and volunteers make efforts to explain and contextualise what is being discussed.

Lunch is often taken to the concierge of the flats, who also comes into the common room on occasion to say hello. This is another example of mundane but important ways that HRB builds local community.

Additionally, several participants have begun to meet outside the project. Eg. two now also volunteer with another BtG project (see also 4.4), and visit each other at home. Another has cooked food from their country of origin at other people's houses. The Bakery Supervisor plays a critical role in sharing information about other projects and events and places of interest/relevance to volunteers, and actively encourages people to get involved with these and to become engaged locally.

The value of the Supervisor's local knowledge and contacts should be stressed here; through informal conversation, building strong relationships with volunteers and being involved in other community initiatives and activities themselves (eg. other BtG projects, local church and related events)

Further, people mention 'bumping into' each other around the neighbourhood, in the Job Employment office and 'in the town' (city centre):

I've new friend and know lots of the bakers now ... I see [name] around the town and I saw [name] in the co-op just the other day and [name] at church and [name] down at Come Dine with Us¹⁵

Outreach activities, while less frequent, are important to build wider community connections. Beyond the common room, HRB have had a stall annually at the summer

¹⁵ A local initiative providing a monthly evening meal for G5 residents to come together.

Gorbals Fair, with which BtG has been involved for many years. There is also a Gorbals Market, nominally held monthly at The Barn, though this does not always occur and volunteers are not always available for a stand.

HRB have run bread-making workshops at Adelphi nursery and St. Francis primary school, and a community workshop in a local church hall, which was 'very much' enjoyed by volunteers involved:

I can get meet more people and tell them the bread is so good

I love doing baking with the wee kids they get so into it ... and then you see them around and can say hello to their mams



These quotes highlight the potential of building wider connections that stalls and workshops enable, while also needed to develop business:

we need more people to know about this [HRB] and if ... we need more people to buy bread cos we need more markets to market better to get bigger

Staff report that outreach activity is well received, and that the workshop at Adelphi has increased customer base a little, with parents now buying bread directly from the common room. Moreover, it cemented the partnership between them. Through the workshop, HRB put Adelphi in touch with Scotland the Bread, who run a Soil to Slice programme: "helping local communities to grow and bake their own healthy bread, from the soil to the slice",¹⁶ encouraging local communities to grow wheat and turn it into bread, to learn where food comes from. This year, Adelphi planted three beds of wheat just outside Waddell Court, to be harvested by Scotland the Bread, who will mill it and pass the flour to HRB to make bread, for the nursery.

Building on this partnership, there was a day-long event organised by Adelphi on the theme of 'Learning for Sustainability', a city-wide initiative to which they invited HRB to have a stand. The event was attended by around 20 other nurseries from across Glasgow, and HRB

¹⁶ <http://www.scotlandthebread.org/soil-to-slice-2/>

(one staff and one volunteer) took bread and homemade jam tasters to hand out and explain what they do. Adelphi staff gave a presentation and have produced a book about Learning for Sustainability, in which HRB feature.



The Bakery Supervisor plus two volunteers have also been involved with 'show and tell' events across the local area, as part of a scheme in which churches visit one another to share activities they undertake, and projects that are working to support local people.

Another small yet unintended aspect of HRB has been to improve the reputation of the area among volunteers who come from outside G5:

Gorbals has such a bad reputation but I am very pleasantly surprised ... there's so much going on here ... lots of projects and support stuff not like [where they live] ... and I've not had any troubles it's very friendly

4.3 Developing skills

Participants identified key skills they gain and/or improve at HRB, specifically in terms of 'practical' or 'employability' skills. Baking skills are the most obvious and commonly mentioned:

my baking is getting better ... I did some cooking before not so much baking ... now I can make a Gorbals loaf without looking at the recipe so using my brain a bit more

I like to bake at home but for bigger amounts is very different skills ... so learn new things ... also need to be a team which is good to learn

Two recent successes can be attributed, in part, to baking skills developed at HRB. One participant (with refugee status) who volunteered at HRB for over a year, got a job at a care home. They explained that one of key reasons they got the post is because of their experience at HRB: their new employers have asked that they run baking sessions with the elderly as part of their role. Another current volunteer is now less regular at HRB as they are taking a catering and hospitality course (PT) at college. This involves practical experience, cooking in the college restaurant and serving meals to students and staff. They believe that being at HRB helped them get onto the course, and that volunteering, alongside the qualifications, will be important in finding relevant future work.

Team working and communication skills were mentioned less often, and time-keeping only a couple of times. This is unsurprising given the value attached to informality by the participants (4.5)

English language skills were considered of more importance to those from outside Scotland. Practicing English through conversation was observed throughout the research, while one participant from a refugee background explicitly said that they volunteer not to develop baking skills (already very good), but for the sociability and *'to keep being better with English'*.

4.4 Building confidence

In addition to skills, volunteers' experience at HRB clearly leads to increased confidence among all longer term participants (for volunteers just starting, this is not possible to evaluate). Whether through training, baking together, or getting involved in outreach events:

we went and did a training twice once was to Breadmatters and they're the people that mentor us ... and then we also went and did some sourdough training at the bakery in Springborough ... and that helped us feel that we could do this

aye I've went on the training that was good ... then we thought aye we'll make bread

I've really grown in confidence ... talking with everyone and making friends good friends

and we've had people occasionally coming here and baking with us to find more about us

you see what you're achieving straight away which is great for your confidence

In its first year, HRB was invited to speak at The Uprising, an annual gathering of non-commercial bakers from across the UK, and the Supervisor and a volunteer did so. HRB were mentioned in the keynote speech, regarding the project's uniqueness in making bread for the community in which it is based. Additionally, on occasion bakers and/or project development workers from elsewhere visit HRB, to learn about the project. This interest, together with the mentorship from Breadmatters (1.1), is based on HRB's aims to bring healthy eating, sustainability, education and building community together in their work, and has garnered praise for its people-centred approach. There is clearly pride among longer term volunteers about this interest and acclaim.

Two participants attributed gaining confidence through HRB as enabling them to now also volunteer with another BtG project. Another has become more confident in their baking abilities, such that they have begun to experiment with recipes at HRB to try out new things.

4.5 Informal and welcoming environment

While informality and welcome are separate things, the research shows that it is the *combination of the two* at HRB that is valued by participants. Informality is evidenced through the often ad hoc manner in which people join the project, largely through word-of-mouth. Eg. one volunteer began as their sister left, as she suggested to them they would benefit from it; another found HRB 'by accident' when they came to the flats to do laundry, felt unwell, heard voices and walked through the common room door. The latter describes being 'warmly welcomed', given a cup of tea and told what was going on, then after a chat was invited to come as volunteer the next week.



Participant observation evidenced a relaxed and welcoming environment in practice, as volunteers nominally arrive around 9am and leave at 3pm; in reality attending for as much of the day as often chaotic lives permit. People arrive and leave depending on personal health issues and medical appointments, Employment Office/Job Search commitments (see 5.x), Home Office requirements and so on:

it feels comfortable and I like the routine ... I come as much as I can

there isn't too much pressure here ... if I really don't feel up to it I can miss a week but I don't usually miss 'cos it does me so much good ... the flexibility is important though

I like having something to do and I like to sell the bread from the table cos I like to talk to people coming in ... sometimes I wash up instead of baking cos then I can talk more

It is telling that the volunteer who had just left HRB to work at a care home said how much they will miss their 'family' at HRB, and is keen to still attend if shifts permit. Likewise, the regular non-volunteer enjoys this informality, and feels 'free to come and go as I need', committing to the project because of this. Both spoke of the warmth and welcome found in the common room and kitchen. While there are disagreements between volunteers at times, differences in opinion during the research were handled by everyone in a non-confrontational way:

baking is sociable activity ... not like committees and talking and the politics in that ... I was on a committee but I had to leave it was too annoying and you can't get up and walk away ... people here are just getting on there's a job to do and timings to follow ... you can have a laugh and bake too

Certainly, there is a lot of laughter in the kitchen. On one occasion during research, kneading the bread was made into a dancing session, which caused much laughter and one participant joked:

I come here for the exercise eh ... baking is good exercise

This participant later said that they had felt isolated for some time, and that they'd lost confidence and weren't sure 'how to be around people' – and crucially that they had attended BtG Big Thursdays Drop-In but that was too busy for them; HRB offered a smaller, more relaxed environment.

Several volunteers are Muslim, and informal space is made available in the corner of the common room for Friday prayers. One participant explained that this felt comfortable *because* of the informal atmosphere, and because they have been involved with other BtG projects and knew several bakers before starting at HRB.

During research, a man came into the common room, seemed familiar with the place, knew the Bakery Supervisor and wanted some advice and to sit and use the wifi. He is one of several asylum seekers, refugees and G5 natives who *'pop in from time to time just for a chat or with some questions'*. He was given a cup of tea and biscuits and left again when ready.

5. Challenges

5.1 Finding appropriate premises to increase capacity

there's the potential to sell locally to an addictions hostel and local care homes other nurseries and schools ... lots of folk are interested but until we've our own kitchen and capacity to grow we couldn't take this up as we might let people down ... we hit lots of healthy eating targets in government and institutional agendas

The **main challenge identified in the research is the need for HRB to have their own kitchen and common room space**. HRB secured the current premises through links with NGHHA (1.1), who suggested they approach the Way to Go café in Wardle Court flats to use the kitchen and space that the café operates in. Sharing kitchen space has limited HRB to two days/week, based on the availability around Way to Go café. The initial intention of HRB was to extend to three/four days/week by the end of two years of operation, but this has not been possible without dedicated space.

While NGHHA own and manage the Waddell Court property, Way to Go café have used the space since before NGHHA came into being. Way to Go are key holders, and in effect day-to-day managers, with what HRB experience as a strong sense of ownership over the space: *'it's not the easiest of relationships'*. There is sensitivity over HRB's use of the kitchen and common room, while participants often mentioned that *'we can do more in here'* and are keen to work in closer partnership with the café (see 5.5). However, at present for example, HRB are asked to leave the premises over the school summer break when Way to Go run daytime activities with young people.

Adelphi nursery kitchen has been mentioned as a possible host to HRB. While basing there would clearly strengthen the partnership with the nursery, there are concerns that the project would lose its openness and informality, and prevent diverse people dropping in:

so it's far far more than making and selling bread ... some people just drop by cos they know we'll be here and they want some advice or a chat ... that couldn't happen at the nursery

There are question marks, too, as to whether all volunteers would have to get DBS checked, which could have significant implications to referrals and who volunteers.

At the end of the research period, another local block of flats was suggested to HRB as potential new premises by NGHHA. Currently a 'shell' large enough for a kitchen and common room, initial conversations with NGHHA staff were positive. However, HRB were later told that the space had been earmarked for 'older people as priority in the local area'. This seems at odds with recent findings of longitudinal research regarding community wellbeing,¹⁷ which identifies the social integration of migrants as of critical importance to wider community social and economic health. HRB staff also feel that there would be wider benefits to exploring how HRB could engage with older people, rather than setting one group of people with support needs against another.

¹⁷ http://www.gowellonline.com/research_and_findings/key_findings/communities

GoWell was established in 2005 as a longitudinal research programme, investigating the impacts of investment in housing and neighbourhood regeneration in Glasgow on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

Positively, there is expectation at HRB that, should kitchen space be identified, funding would be available through the Fairer Food Transformation Fund to fully equip it. As part of a large multi-agency bid in a previous financial year to FFTF, BtG/HRB were offered significant funds to equip a kitchen, but had to hand back the money at the time because they were still to find premises. They were encouraged to return to FFTF once HRB get a kitchen of their own, regarding funding possibilities. Until then:

there is great will among the bakers to do more, but we need a base ... everything feels on hold

5.2 Maintaining people-centred approach while growing a 'social enterprise' model

Another key challenge will be **increasing the numbers of volunteers, days of operation and product delivery** to move towards the intended social enterprise (SE) model, without compromising the strengths outlined above. Research shows a desire for becoming a SE across staff and volunteers, to increase community building, further tackle social isolation and improve social support, as well as being in a financial position to employ one or two volunteers as part-time bakers (as set out in HRB Business Plan):

moving forwards is the idea to have this as a social enterprise that can pay wages ... I mean we would love it if you know to give maybe one or two decent part time jobs ... to the one or two volunteers who can't get whatever some employment anywhere else for ... different reasons but ... most of the people who come through here wouldn't be able to sustain more than perhaps one day but ... it would be really meaningful



This challenge is embedded in wider structural issues. Staff identified a lack of communication between statutory and non-statutory provision that leaves people in precarious positions. One example is a long term volunteer with BtG, who has struggled to find work that fits around childcare needs. They can now only attend HRB infrequently as they have to attend the DWP's 'work programme'. BtG have been supporting this volunteer to apply for jobs, and had previously reached an agreement with the Employment Office that the volunteer could continue at HRB as their work programme, while searching for paid employment. However, the individual was then transferred to a different Employment Office, the connection with personnel at the first office was lost and the agreement void. Since then, this volunteer has been sent to work in what staff consider '*inappropriate shifts in inappropriate places*'. The situation is clearly stressful for the volunteer, who says that their mental and physical health is suffering.

Such DWP demands adversely affect other parents and non-parents at HRB. Further, issues around sanctions (having benefits stopped for not attending DWP appointments or work programmes) were a common topic of conversation during the research, and a real concern for most participants (eg. the non-volunteer 4.1). Moreover, a lack of joined up services across health, education and other statutory provision was described as 'system failure' that leaves organisations like BtG with a crucial role, supporting people 'on the very edge'.

Working with people in such precarious positions requires the people-centred and informal approaches outlined above, and means that volunteer numbers can never be precise:

so we had a time in the summer where it felt like we didn't have enough people especially on a Wednesday ... but today we've had lots of folk and not quite enough to do so ... volunteering's just like that it's like that all the time

it's important not to stress regular attendance but to come as we are able to ... so sometimes the kitchen very full and sometimes only a couple

it's hard to plan ahead and expand when who's going to show up is uncertain ... we shouldn't put profit over people the commitments that people can make are different and change on week to week basis ... so some asylum seekers and unemployed are called into interviews or sent on placements with no notice ... and like [name] today with health problems they're off to doctor's appointments ... they're chaotic lives

Volunteers' length of stay at HRB likewise varies: an average appears to be around 6-8 months, though some volunteer for much longer and others briefly.



All this makes for difficulty in planning ahead and expanding to a SE model. The flexibility to volunteer as and when people feel capable was identified as a key strength (4.5), and almost all participants said that more formal requirements on their time or commitment would be a disincentive rather than encouragement to attend:

see there's a risk that if the HRB gets more slick then it becomes a job and a business ... which would risk all the reasons we come for ... business means pressure and less fun

However, there are clear potential markets in the local area, especially within the education and health sectors (see 5.4), and some participants pointed to the need for HRB to market and sell bread as much as bring people together:

it's lovely bread and we need to sell it more in the community ... we should have a shop set up a shop properly ... sell it and market it properly

we could sell a whole heap of bread to the sports centre café it's just down the road

This paradox¹⁸ will remain until HRB are able to increase numbers of people, days and product: they cannot scale up by increasing marketing and create a demand they are unable to meet; without scaling up, they cannot financially develop a SE model. There are further particular challenges in becoming a SE, related to becoming more business-oriented.

5.3 Developing business processes

The research suggests that business **strategizing, marketing, accounting and auditing** is currently underdeveloped at HRB. Adopting more business-oriented and financial protocols required in a SE will present challenges for all,

Marketing has so far been nominal. There are two stand-up signs, one placed immediately outside the flats and one on the main road at the junction with the footpath that leads to the flats. These bring in minimal passing trade, and while there are individuals who come in every week, this is a small regular customer base.



HRB use Facebook and Twitter, although the success of social media has not been assessed yet by HRB/BtG. Anecdotally, staff believe that:

I suspect Twitter mainly reaches other organisations ... Facebook I think reaches some customers but probably not the customers that ... not reach new customers ... so most of it is word of mouth ... because we're restricted in the times that we're baking I think we lose a whole lot of potential ... although we run 9-3 we're only selling half 12-3 'cos we're not baking on consecutive days ... realistically that's a small window ... and you're missing people on the school run and coming to or back from work

To date, HRB bake to order so they can prepare batch sizes nearest to the number of orders; and whatever is left after orders are collected go for direct sale in the common room. Thus if passing customers come in before orders are all due to be collected, this is explained and:

¹⁸ This issue is usual for all growing businesses, but holds particular challenges for any organisation whose main remit is supporting people rather than purely financial.

they might place an order [for another day] ... or they might say oh you know I'll come back and see if there's any left at the end of the day

Currently HRB rely more on organisations and businesses who place the regular orders, including Adelphi nursery, Eurofoods shop in Pollockshields, and Urban Roots in Govan (a community organisation).

There are also orders from other voluntary sector organisations, though unfortunately, given these organisations' own precarious and demanding day-to-day operations, they are not always collected, or promised orders are not placed:

so other unknowns are the fragility of other projects we could work with ... so TASK want to have Family Breakfasts which we have agreed to bake for but they had their own staffing capacity issues and these haven't taken off yet

Meanwhile, financial processes; collecting monies, accounting and auditing is of a lower priority in daily/weekly tasks. During the research, for example, a local voluntary café asked for a batch of cookies to sell. When a volunteer delivered the products, the café asked the prices, which the volunteer didn't know so said the café should phone the Bakery Supervisor to find out. This phone call didn't happen, and the café gave the cookies out for free. The Bakery Supervisor then had to invoice the café and chase up payment. While such informal financial processes are central in maintaining trust among other local actors, they present a challenge to developing a necessarily more business-oriented model – that can pay wages and cover costs.

There was also a suggestion among participants that bread be more professionally packaged with HRB labels, and brief discussion as to the additional work this would involve.

5.4 Staff capacity for networking/project development

BtG is already well-networked in the local area and wider city, with 20 years working and building links (1.). However, research suggests that **HRB staff capacity needs to be increased** to expand HRB as a SE: to develop and maintain referral routes, support volunteers, and to network with nurseries, schools and other organisations to increase local markets. This challenge sits amid a difficult funding environment.

As already clear in this report, there is significant potential to further network, increase connections and build community, especially within relevant education initiatives such as Learning for Sustainability, and around healthy eating. For example, Govanhill nursery have asked HRB about supplying bread, and there were other enquiries at the recent event hosted by Adelphi nursery. There is also an 'Ecoschools' movement in Glasgow that HRB is keen to get involved with, and which would resonate well with BtG's other work in secondary schools. In particular, the opportunities for outreach activities (bread making workshops) appear significant.

Further, several participants highlighted the potential to work with young people who attend Way to Go café activities, especially over the school holidays, to build better connections. While efforts are underway to explore this latter opportunity with café staff, HRB staff and volunteers currently have insufficient time and energy to do wider networking consistently.

4.2 outlines that more volunteers will be needed for project development. To date, referrals have been largely ad-hoc. In the first year, there was an arrangement that NGHFA welfare

rights staff¹⁹ would refer to HRB, given NGHAs brokering of the premises. However, in practice the two people referred through this route had high support needs and *'weren't ready for that stage it was too much'*. Referrals from NGHAs have since ceased, as HRB staff have not had capacity to maintain links.

The two main referral routes are word-of-mouth, and through BtG projects (especially Big Thursdays Drop-In). This has elicited sufficient numbers for HRB in their current situation and premises, though will need to be re-considered moving forwards.

HRB staff stress the time required outside of baking hours to run HRB at current capacity. There are the practical bakery needs such as ordering ingredients, preparing dough mix the day before baking (it needs to rise overnight), ensuring the kitchen is cleaned thoroughly after every session, etc. Then comes the networking, communication with other statutory and non-statutory bodies, maintaining social media presence, chasing up diverse social support needs of the diverse volunteers, and accounting and auditing: *'it's a much bigger job than it sounds'*.



As mentioned above (5.3), HRB have significant potential to develop, yet working with precarious people and organisations demands significant staff time and energy:

but it's trying to get hold of other staff and supervisors and I still haven't quite come to an arrangement [with name of organisation] ... but they are really keen and we are really keen so we should be supplying them with the bread shortly

The Board of BtG will need to make a 'leap of faith' if employing a further person for one or two days:

we'll need funding into the medium term ... probably long term

The research suggests that investing in another member of staff has significant potential to develop HRB. Crucially such an additional post would need to complement current roles rather than mimic them: recruitment would need to emphasise the strategic networking, marketing and business needs of HRB, though importantly with a strong understanding of and commitment to people-centred working, support needs and community development.

¹⁹ NGHAs welfare rights staff have an oversight of all the housing in the area and are aware of isolated individuals.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This report sets out a 'snapshot' of HRB project over its first two years of operation, based on unfunded scoping research that involved the qualitative methods of participant observation and informal interviews.

HRB has developed through BtG's long term connections and successes in the southside of Glasgow, expanding a practical activity (baking) that was successful in BtG's Big Thursdays Drop-In into a discrete project.

Key strengths of HRB are:

- reducing social isolation among volunteers
- building community between individuals within the project, and between individuals and organisations across the neighbourhood
- developing practical baking skills, as well as organisational, team-working, communication and organisation skills
- building confidence among volunteers, to move onto paid employment and/or other voluntary positions, further tackling social isolations and mental health issues

These key strengths are enabled specifically through **providing an informal and welcoming space**, open to non-volunteers, and bringing people together in a relaxed and supportive environment.

Key challenges ahead are:

- finding and equipping other appropriate premises to increase capacity
- balancing BtG's people-centred approach while growing a 'social enterprise' model to employ one/two volunteers and expand activities
- developing business processes, and incorporating more strategic financial, auditing, marketing and outreach approaches
- increasing staff capacity for networking and project development.